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ART. VII. — *Lectures on Art, and Poems.* By WASHINGTON ALLSTON. Edited by RICHARD HENRY DANA, JR. New York: Baker & Scribner. 1850. 12mo. pp. 380.

It is now seven years since the remains of Washington Allston, the greatest artist of America, were followed by mourning friends and admirers to the old burying ground in Cambridge. It was universally felt that a man of the rarest genius and the loveliest character had been removed from a community which his presence honored and his influence exalted. The first steps were taken towards commemorating his life and works by raising a monument to his memory in the beautiful neighboring necropolis of Mount Auburn, which should be worthy of the genius and virtues of him who slept beneath it, and fitly express the affectionate and admiring recollections of the survivors who reared it there. Such a monument was not needed for Allston's fame; *that* is forever established by the works in which his spirit yet lives, and over which the waves of oblivion shall never sweep. But it was needed for our own credit, and for our own intellectual satisfaction and moral good. We should not have allowed the busy occupations of daily life so to employ our hands and fill our hearts, as to permit him whom we admired for his surpassing genius, and loved for the possession of every gentle and noble virtue, to lie down in the long sleep of death with no monumental pile to fix the eye of the traveller, and to express to the world by the silent voice of art how much we revered the memory of art's most devoted worshipper. We trust this duty to the illustrious dead is not to remain forever unperformed. In heathen times, in the earliest dawn of poetry, the pious feelings of the living made the burial rites and monumental mound contribute even to the felicity of the departed.

"Such honors Ilion to her hero paid,
And peaceful slept the mighty Hector's shade."

Mr. Allston's life was entirely occupied with those pursuits which address themselves to man's higher nature. No worldly passions, no petty ambitions, ever disturbed the serenity of that elevated region in which his pure spirit moved. In the kindred arts of poetry, painting, and romance, he showed the

versatile felicity of his genius. In early life, while yet a student of painting in Rome, his works attracted the admiration of his brother artists, and an able critic, in Bunsen's volumes on Rome, declares that the coloring of his pictures approached nearer the great Italian masters than those of any other modern painter. It was his good fortune to enjoy for many years the friendship of Coleridge, whose estimation of Allston's poetical genius was shown by printing, accompanied with high but well deserved praises, in a volume of his own poems, Allston's noble lines, "*America to England*," which have become classical in our literature. His romance of *Monaldi* was reviewed in this Journal on its first appearance. The high opinion we then expressed of its merits — the powerful conception of the principal characters — the tragic interest of the story — the profoundly moral and religious spirit — and the purity and splendor of the style — remains unchanged, after many readings and the lapse of years. "He is not only a painter," says the German translator of this work, in the introduction to his version, "not only a historical painter, not only a painter with the pencil and pallet, but also with the pen, and, I believe, one of the best poets in this country. He is, moreover, a very noble man." "In the arrangement of the whole," (he speaks of *Monaldi*,) "in the distribution of light and shade, in the economy of the piece, there is somewhat pictorial." Again, "The whole appears to me like a great landscape-historical picture, with fore-ground, middle-ground, and back-ground, full of life, truth, and thought. The execution of the single groups is eminently successful; there are, perhaps, defects, but only in the completing transitions."

Mr. Allston's universally recognized position as the first painter of our country, and certainly one of the first in our age, will make the volume whose title is placed at the head of the present brief paper a welcome gift, not only to all the lovers of art, but to all who take an interest in elegant literature. The spirit of beauty which breathes through his poetical writings — the offspring of hours of rest from the labors of the pencil — will fill with delight the breasts of those who fly to the Muse for solace amidst the multiplying cares of life, or seek in poetry for the graceful embellishments that idealize the business of the crowded day. The

gentle dignity of Mr. Allston's personal character was such that in his presence all discord died away, and the conflict of opposing opinions softened into the richest harmony of friendly discourse. The pride of letters, the jealousies of artists, the spirit of detraction vanished before his genial smile, and the kindly urbanity of his manner. The blandness of his ever-varied conversation, uttered in a voice of singular sweetness and power, his high-bred, unaffected, and most gentleman-like demeanor, and the Attic purity and felicity of his wit, made his society the greatest delight to all who enjoyed the rare happiness of living in his neighborhood and of sharing in his social nights. Mr. Allston never had an enemy. One would as soon have thought of indulging in hostile feelings against a star as against him, so completely was he removed from the region of evil passions and strife. Men of the most opposite opinions, belonging to different schools upon every subject of human thought, agreed in the common sentiment of reverence and love for Allston; and his life, with its comprehensive influences for good, and good alone, and good in its highest and most permanent forms, is a perfect refutation of the pernicious theory, that a great man must work out the purposes of his existence by a constant warfare against his fellow men.

Of Mr. Allston's position as an artist, we do not propose to speak; nor is it necessary to enlarge upon what is recognized by the best judges both in Europe and America. His poetical genius, as exhibited in a few well-known pieces, has been unanimously acknowledged. *The Sylphs of the Seasons*, *The Paint King*, *America to Great Britain*, to which allusion has already been made, stand, and have long stood, among the most beautiful poems in American literature.

Mr. Allston's poetical style is remarkable for the careful finishing hand with which he elaborated every part of every poem. He never fell into the negligent, slipshod, vague, and half expressed mannerism, so common in these days. His practice as an artist was carried into his writings, and applied scrupulously to every production of his pen. The exquisite purity of his language, reminding us constantly of the fine coloring of his pencil, shows how thoroughly his taste was guarded, in the atmosphere of beauty that accompanied his mind, from all touch of contemporary faults. Loving heartily every genial variety of literature, whether

belonging to the past or present, and showing, both in conversation and writing, with what a ready and versatile power he could work in different forms, he yet subjected his own style to a rigid self-criticism that harmonizes with the principles of an earlier and more classical age, rather than with the romantic outflow of the present. His poetical writings, therefore, will not undergo the changes of opinion incident to the fleeting popularity of temporary mannerism. They will stand the test of time. The criticism of posterity will find in them the same qualities to praise that have commended them to the approbation of the wisest contemporary judges.

The following little poem, expressing in words the spirit of one of Mr. Allston's most admired pictures, *Rosalie*, is one of the sweetest compositions that ever flowed from poet's pen : —

“ O, pour upon my soul again
That sad, unearthly strain,
That seems from other worlds to plain ;
Thus falling, falling from afar,
As if some melancholy star
Had mingled with her light her sighs,
And dropped them from the skies !

“ No, — never came from aught below
This melody of woe,
That makes my heart to overflow,
As from a thousand gushing springs,
Unknown before ; that with it brings
This nameless light, — if light it be, —
That veils the world I see.

“ For all I see around me wears
The hue of other spheres ;
And something blent of smiles and tears
Comes from the very air I breathe.
O, nothing, sure, the stars beneath
Can mould a sadness like to this, —
So like angelic bliss.”

So, at that dreamy hour of day
When the last lingering ray
Stops on the highest cloud to play, —
So thought the gentle *Rosalie*,
As on her maiden *revêrie*
First fell the strain of him who stole
In music to her soul.

As a pendant to this, we quote the lines on Horatio Greenough's well-known Group of the Angel and Child, both as a fine example of Allston's power of translating into poetry the conceptions of art, and of his generous appreciation of the works of other artists.

I stood alone : nor word, nor other sound,
Broke the mute solitude that closed me round ;
As when the Air doth take her midnight sleep,
Leaving the wintry stars her watch to keep,
So slept she now at noon. But not alone
My spirit then ; a light within me shone
That was not mine ; and feelings undefined,
And thoughts, flowed in upon me not my own.
'T was that deep mystery, — for aye unknown, —
The living presence of another's mind.

Another mind was there, — the gift of few, —
That by its own strong will can all that's true
In its own nature unto others give,
And, mingling life with life, seem there to live.
I felt it then in mine : and, O, how fair,
How beautiful, the thoughts that met me there, —
Visions of Love and Purity and Truth !
Though form distinct had each, they seemed as 't were
Embodied all of *one* celestial air,
To beam for ever in coequal youth.

And thus I learned, as in the mind they moved,
These Stranger Thoughts the one the other loved ;
That Purity loved Truth, because 't was true,
And Truth, because 't was pure, the first did woo ;
While Love, as pure and true, did love the twain ;
Then Love was loved of them, for that sweet chain
That bound them all. Thus sure, as passionless,
Their love did grow, till one harmonious strain
Of melting sounds they seemed ; then, changed again,
One Angel Form they took, — Self-Happiness.

This Angel Form the gifted Artist saw,
That held me in his spell. 'T was his to draw
The veil of sense, and see the immortal race,
The Forms spiritual that know not place.
He saw it in the quarry, deep in earth,
And stayed it by his will, and gave it birth
E'en to the world of sense ; bidding its cell,
The cold, hard marble, thus in plastic girth
The shape ethereal fix, and body forth
A Being of the skies, — with man to dwell.

And then another Form beside it stood :
'T was one of this our world, though the warm blood
Had from it passed, — exhaled as in a breath
Drawn from its lips by the cold kiss of Death.
Its little “ dream of human life ” had fled ;
And yet it seemed not numbered with the dead,
But one emerging to a life so bright,
That, as the wondrous nature o'er it spread,
Its very consciousness did seem to shed
Rays from within, and clothe it all in light.

Now touched the Angel Form its little hand,
Turning upon it with a look so bland,
And yet so full of majesty, as less
Than holy natures never may impress, —
And more than proudest guilt unmoved may brook.
The Creature of the Earth now felt that look,
And stood in blissful awe, — as one above,
Who saw its name in the Eternal Book,
And Him that opened it ; e'en Him that took
The Little Child, and blessed it in his love.

We close our extracts from this part of the volume with a portion of the lines to the author of the *Diary of an Ennuyée*. It will be remembered that Mrs. Jameson, whose works are among the most delightful books of the day, visited the United States some years ago, and during the lifetime of Mr. Allston. Her cultivated taste, and her enthusiastic love of the beautiful, led her to seek out and study all the pictures of our artist which were then accessible. She also became personally acquainted with the artist himself, being drawn to him not only by affinity of taste and genius, but doubtless somewhat by the impression made upon her, by this elegant poem, written long before her visit, and which we had ourselves the pleasure of placing in her hands. In the charming book Mrs. Jameson published on her return to England, appeared an eloquent and appreciating estimate of Mr. Allston.

Sweet, gentle Sibyl ! would I had the charm,
E'en while the spell upon my heart is warm,
To waft my spirit to thy far-off dreams,
That, giving form and melody to air,
The long-sealed fountains of my youth might there
Before thee shout, and toss their starry stream,
Flushed with the living light which youth alone
Sheds like the flash from heaven, — that straight is gone !

For thou hast waked as from the sleep of years, —
No, not the memory, with her hopes and fears, —
But e'en the breathing, bounding, *present* youth ;
And thou hast waked him in that vision clime,
Which, having seen, no eye the second time
May ever see in its own glorious truth ; —
As if it *were not*, in this world of strife,
Save to the first deep consciousness of life.

And yet, by thy sweet sorcery, is mine
Again the same fresh heart, — e'en fresh as thine, —
As when, entranced, I saw the mountain kings,
The giant Alps, from their dark purple beds
Rise ere the sun,* the while their crowned heads
Flashed with his thousand heralds' golden wings ;
The while the courtly Borromean Isles
Looked on their mirrored forms with rippling smiles.

E'en in thy freshness do I see thee rise,
Bright, peerless Italy, thy gorgeous skies,
Thy lines of harmony, thy nameless hues, —
As 't were by passing Angels sportive dropped
From flowers of Paradise, but newly cropped,
Still bathed and glittering with celestial dews !
I see thee, — and again what visions pass,
Called up by thee, as in some magic glass !

Again I feel the Tuscan Zephyrs brush
My youthful brow, and see them laughing rush,
As if their touch another sense had given,
Swift o'er the dodging grass, like living things ;
In myriads glancing from their flickering wings
The rose and azure of their native heaven ; —
And now they mount, and through the sullen green
Of the dark laurel dart a silvery sheen.

O, now, as once, pure playmates of the soul !
Bear me, as then, where the white billows roll
Of yon ethereal ocean, poised above.
How touching thus from that o'erhanging sea
To look upon the world ! Now, more to me
Its wrongs and sorrows, nay, a wider love
Grows on my heart, than where its pleasures press,
And throng me round as one whom they would bless.

* The writer passed a night, and saw the sun rise, on the Lago Maggiore.

The portion of the volume which will excite the most interest and attention at the present moment, consists of the *Lectures on Art*, now for the first time printed. In an article published in this *Journal* six or seven years ago, we took occasion to allude to these discourses, which it had been our great privilege to hear read by their author. The impression we had received, and the opinion we expressed in the paper referred to, have been sustained by a careful perusal of them in print. We regard them as the most important addition to the literature of art which has been made within our memory; and the literature of art, we need not say, is one of the most attractive to people of high intellectual culture. Our language does not abound in works of this description; but the few we do possess are of great merit, as they are generally the recorded experience of practical artists. The Germans have cultivated this subject, as they have every other, with exhaustive erudition and profound speculation. The Italians, who live and move and have their being in an atmosphere of art, have also accomplished much. Lanzi's *History of Painting* is an elaborate but not very lively work. Vasari, himself a distinguished artist of the sixteenth century, and known throughout Europe by his writings, and Benvenuto Cellini, whose autobiography was translated in so masterly a manner by Goethe, are among the most eminent who have contributed by their pens to illustrate the arts to which their lives were consecrated; but their works make only a small portion of what Italy has done in this department.

In England, the classical Flaxman, known everywhere for the severe purity of his designs, delivered a course of ten lectures on Sculpture to the pupils of the Royal Academy, which, notwithstanding some literary defects owing to his imperfect training in youth, will ever remain a standard work. Especially, the two lectures on Beauty and Composition will deserve the attention of the critic, whether in literature or in art. As we read these discourses, we are constantly reminded of those matchless outlines from Homer, Æschylus, Hesiod, and Dante, appreciated and admired among all civilized nations; which, creating a severe but lovely style of art, have never been equalled or approached by any of their innumerable imitators. Fuseli's lectures are valuable, though often badly written, and abounding with half devel-

oped ideas. He was an able critic and an accomplished scholar, as his correspondence with Cowper upon that poet's translation of Homer shows; but he was an extravagant and tasteless artist, and the influence of his genius has nearly died away. His writings, however, deserve to keep their place in literature. It is hardly necessary to allude to Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses, which have long since become a permanent part of the fine literature of England, on account of the quiet elegance of their style. They do not, however, handle the topics of art with much depth of philosophic insight. Their practical value, we suppose is, very great, and they must always be read wherever English culture reaches, for they are a noble monument of a great age in the history of the land of our ancestors.* Of English works in the present day, two deserve especial mention; "The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression as connected with the Fine Arts," by Sir Charles Bell, and Mr. Ruskin's brilliant volumes on the Painters. The former is a matchless treatise, whether we regard the beauty and vigor of the style, the accuracy of observation, or the profound and far-reaching science exhibited in every sentence of its elaborate pages. The latter is written with much knowledge of art, and in a style whose eloquence, generally picturesque, occasionally magnificent, always exciting, yet sometimes rises into a rarefied atmosphere of expression, where meaning first becomes gaseous and then vanishes into the empyrean. The author is a bold speculator, and runs against received opinions with the dauntless intrepidity of a mailed knight in the lists of a tournament. His vivid imagination often carries his judgment captive, and we more admire the splendor of his sentences than rely upon his opinions, admit his premises, or understand his principles. He rushes fiercely into the two opposite extremes of the iconoclast and the idolater. He takes a weird delight in pulling down the Old Masters from their heights of fame, and in setting up far above them the wildest and most erring mannerist of the age.

From this brief excursion, we return to Mr. Allston. We think it must be obvious to every reflecting reader, that in

* Mr. Dana has fallen into an accidental error in mentioning Reynolds among the personal friends of Mr. Allston. Reynolds died in 1792, and Mr. Allston did not go to England until 1801.

some respects, he was better qualified to discuss the subject of art than any of his predecessors. As we have shown, he combined the most comprehensive experience in studying the great works of the artists of all ages and nations, during his long residence abroad, and especially in the plastic period of his youth, with various study and practice in kindred arts; and at the foundation of the whole lay a thorough classical education, which adorned the native elegance of his mind and manners with the fairest flowers and the ripest fruits of scholarship. In this circumstance we find one of the sources of the harmonious growth of his genius. Too many of our artists — and it is to some extent the same with the artists of other countries — enter upon the career that is to occupy their lives, unfurnished with the learning and culture which an early classical education alone can give; and they continue, to their great disadvantage and regret, to manifest a certain crudity in matters beyond their special art, and a one-sided development, materially impairing the satisfaction they would otherwise take in their pursuits and the genial influence they might exercise in their appropriate sphere. We are constantly impressed, in Mr. Allston's writings on art, with the completeness of his intellectual view, and the freedom with which he moves through the whole compass of thought in the domain of art and through all the provinces connected with it. The earlier influences of the profound and affluent genius of Coleridge left unmistakable traces upon his mind, and decided the peculiar coloring of his speculative views; but he has nowhere wandered into the obscurities which too often darkened the struggling conceptions of that great writer. Whatever of Coleridge's philosophy retained its hold upon Mr. Allston was so blended with his independent meditations, that it served only to heighten them by the hues of a spiritual manner of thinking, harmonizing admirably with the poetical light thrown by his own genius over all the objects of thought.

These discourses, four in number, contain, as it were, the essence of Allston's entire artistic life. They had grown up in his mind, not for any special occasion, but as embodying the experiences of his intellectual being. Accordingly they are, like his poems, totally free from the mannerisms of the times, and are, in the highest and best sense of the word, ori-

ginal. They have their root in his inmost nature, and they have ripened into the bright consummate flower by a gradual, slow, and organic progress. They have the completeness of his works of art, while the fresh vitality of the most intense intellectual life flows through every part of them. As we read them, we are in the presence of the very soul of Allston ; and whether we agree or not with all of his philosophical statements, we are drawn into perfect sympathy with the lofty spirit of their author ; we feel that the mighty magic of genius, sanctified by purity of purpose, and raised almost to prophetic grandeur by the inspiration of religion, is swaying our spirits at will.

The charm of Mr. Allston's exquisite style is here displayed in its highest perfection. Polished to that point where the fullest vigor and the nicest finish meet, it is moulded into forms of expression fitly adapted to the depth, completeness, and elegance of the thought. It is richly wrought, where the subject naturally lifts itself into the stately sweep of harmonious expression, and again falls into an unadorned simplicity, and sometimes even a rigid precision of phrase, where clearness of statement or subtlety of reasoning breaks and varies the vivid flow of the composition ; and it passes through all these changes with such an equable and gentle movement, that we seem listening, as it were, to the rising and falling of an *Æolian harp*.

Mr. Allston did not live to complete his plan, nor did he ever deliver these discourses, as he had hoped to do, before an audience of artists and scholars in Boston. But each discourse, as we have said, forms almost a treatise by itself. We lament that we have not the series, as he intended to carry it out ; but those we have lose little of their value, and none of their interest, by their isolation from the rest. In a preliminary note, Mr. Allston gives a philosophical explanation of the term *idea*, as he uses it through his Lectures. This note should be carefully studied, and the substance of it accurately remembered by the reader. It is not only a good illustration of Mr. Allston's power of metaphysical analysis, but is essential to a full understanding of many parts of the discourses that follow ; indeed, it may be said to lay the foundation for his theory of art. The principal topic discussed in the introductory discourse is Beauty ; and it would be interesting to compare what Mr. Allston says, with the views of Flaxman, who devotes a lec.

ture to it, and of Bell, who handles the subject briefly, but with consummate ability. Connected with this by an admirable chain of associations, are analyses of Truth, and Goodness, and the Ideas which their manifestations in form and action represent. We quote a few paragraphs.

"We do not say that these eternal Ideas of Beauty, Truth, and Goodness will, strictly speaking, always act. Though indestructible, they may be banished for a time by the perverted Will, and mockeries of the brain, like the fume-born phantoms from the witches' caldron in Macbeth, take their places, and assume their functions. We have examples of this in every age, and perhaps in none more startling than in the present. But we mean only that they cannot be *forgotten*: nay, they are but too often recalled with unwelcome distinctness. Could we read the annals which must needs be scored on every heart, — could we look upon those of the aged reprobate, — who will doubt that their darkest passages are those made visible by the distant gleams from these angelic Forms, that, like the Three which stood before the tent of Abraham, once looked upon his youth?

"And we doubt not that the truest witness to the common source of these inborn Ideas would readily be acknowledged by all, could they return to it now with their matured power of introspection, which is, at least, one of the few advantages of advancing years. But, though we cannot bring back youth, we may still recover much of its purer revelations of our nature from what has been left in the memory. From the dim present, then, we would appeal to that fresher time, ere the young spirit had shrunk from the overbearing pride of the understanding, and confidently ask, if the emotions we then felt from the Beautiful, the True, and the Good, did not seem in some way to refer to a common origin. And we would also ask, if it was then frequent that the influence from one was *singly* felt, — if it did not rather bring with it, however remotely, a sense of something, though widely differing, yet still akin to it. When we have basked in the beauty of a summer sunset, was there nothing in the sky that spoke to the soul of Truth and Goodness? And when the opening intellect first received the truth of the great law of gravitation, or felt itself mounting through the profound of space, to travel with the planets in their unerring rounds, did never then the kindred Ideas of Goodness and Beauty chime in, as it were, with the fabled music, — not fabled to the soul, — which led you on like one entranced?

"And again, when, in the passive quiet of your moral nature, so predisposed in youth to all things genial, you have looked abroad on this marvellous, ever teeming Earth, — ever teeming alike for mind and body, — and have felt upon you flow, as from

ten thousand springs of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, ten thousand streams of innocent enjoyment; did you not then *almost hear* them shout in confluence, and almost *see* them gushing upwards, as if they would prove their unity, in one harmonious fountain?"

We should like to quote several passages from the same lecture, on the Sublime; but we must hurry forward to other topics, after one more paragraph on Beauty.

"It would seem, then, that, in relation to man, Beauty is the extreme point, or last summit, of the natural world, since it is in that that we recognize the highest emotion of which we are susceptible from the purely physical. If we ascend thence into the moral, we shall find its influence diminish in the same ratio with our upward progress. In the continuous chain of creation of which it forms a part, the link above it where the moral modification begins seems scarcely changed, yet the difference, though slight, demands another name, and the nomenclator within us calls it *Elegance*; in the next connecting link, the moral adjunct becomes more predominant, and we call it *Majesty*; in the next, the physical becomes still fainter, and we call the union *Grandeur*; in the next, it seems almost to vanish, and a new form rises before us, so mysterious, so undefined and elusive to the senses, that we turn, as if for its more distinct image, within ourselves, and there, with wonder, amazement, awe, we see it filling, distending, stretching every faculty, till, like the Giant of Otranto, it seems almost to burst the imagination: under this strange confluence of opposite emotions, this terrible pleasure, we call the awful form *Sublimity*. This was the still small voice that shook the Prophet on Horeb;—though small to his ear, it was more than his imagination could contain; he could not hear it again and live."

The next discourse is on the general subject of Art and its characteristics, especially in relation to Painting and Sculpture. These characteristics are laid down as Originality, Human or Poetic Truth, Invention, and Unity, the synthesis of them all. They are treated with consummate eloquence and ability; and the principles here developed apply as well to elegant literature as to the special subject of Painting or Sculpture. But instead of quoting any part of his general observations or reasonings, we will transfer to our pages a description of a Dutch painting, illustrative of Mr. Allston's ideas of invention, followed by another in a very different style; and we shall confess ourselves entirely mistaken if the reader does not feel that the word-pictures before him are vivid transcripts of

their originals, such as never before have been committed to language.

“The interior of a Dutch cottage forms the scene of Ostade’s work, presenting something between a kitchen and a stable. Its principal object is the carcass of a hog, newly washed and hung up to dry ; subordinate to which is a woman nursing an infant ; the accessories, various garments, pots, kettles, and other culinary utensils.

“The bare enumeration of these coarse materials would naturally predispose the mind of one, unacquainted with the Dutch school, to expect any thing but pleasure ; indifference, not to say disgust, would seem to be the only possible impression from a picture composed of such ingredients. And such, indeed, would be their effect under the hand of any but a real Artist. Let us look into the picture, and follow Ostade’s *mind*, as it leaves its impress on the several objects. Observe how he spreads his principal light, from the suspended carcass to the surrounding objects, moulding it, so to speak, into agreeable shapes, here by extending it to a bit of drapery, there to an earthen pot ; then connecting it, by the flash from a brass kettle, with his second light, the woman and child ; and again turning the eye into the dark recesses through a labyrinth of broken chairs, old baskets, roosting fowls, and bits of straw, till a glimpse of sunshine, from a half-open window, gleams on the eye, as it were, like an echo, and sending it back to the principal object, which now seems to act on the mind as the luminous source of all these diverging lights. But the magical whole is not yet completed ; the mystery of color has been called in to the aid of light, and so subtly blends that we can hardly separate them ; at least, until their united effect has first been felt, and after we have begun the process of cold analysis. Yet, even then, we cannot long proceed before we find the charm returning ; as we pass from the blaze of light on the carcass, where all the tints of the prism seem to be faintly subdued, we are met on its borders by the dark harslet, glowing like rubies ; then we repose awhile on the white cap and kerchief of the nursing mother ; then we are roused again by the flickering strife of the antagonist colors on a blue jacket and red petticoat ; then the strife is softened by the low yellow of a straw-bottomed chair ; and thus with alternating excitement and repose do we travel through the picture, till the scientific explorer loses the analyst in the unresisting passiveness of a poetic dream. Now, all this will no doubt appear to many, if not absurd, at least exaggerated ; but not so to those who have ever felt the sorcery of color. They, we are sure, will be the last to question the character of the feeling because of the ingredients which worked the spell, and

if true to themselves, they must call it poetry. Nor will they consider it any disparagement to the all-accomplished Raphael to say of Ostade that he also was an Artist.

“ We turn now to a work of the great Italian, — the Death of Ananias. The scene is laid in a plain apartment, which is wholly devoid of ornament, as became the hall of audience of the primitive Christians. The Apostles (then eleven in number) have assembled to transact the temporal business of the Church, and are standing together on a slightly elevated platform, about which, in various attitudes, some standing, others kneeling, is gathered a promiscuous assemblage of their new converts, male and female. This quiet assembly (for we still feel its quietness in the midst of the awful judgment) is suddenly roused by the sudden fall of one of their brethren ; some of them turn and see him struggling in the agonies of death. A moment before he was in the vigor of life, — as his muscular limbs still bear evidence ; but he had uttered a falsehood, and an instant after his frame is convulsed from head to foot. Nor do we doubt for a moment as to the awful cause ; it is almost expressed in voice by those nearest to him ; and, though varied by their different temperaments, by terror, astonishment, and submissive faith, this voice has yet but one meaning, — ‘ Ananias has lied to the Holy Ghost.’ The terrible words, as if audible to the mind, now direct us to him who pronounced his doom, and the singly-raised finger of the Apostle marks him the judge ; yet not of himself, — for neither his attitude, air, nor expression has any thing in unison with the impetuous Peter, — he is now the simple, passive, yet awful instrument of the Almighty : while another on the right, with equal calmness, though with more severity, by his elevated arm, as beckoning to judgment, anticipates the fate of the entering Sapphira. Yet all is not done ; lest a question remain, the Apostle on the left confirms the judgment. No one can mistake what passes within him ; like one transfixed in adoration, his uplifted eyes seem to ray out his soul, as if in recognition of the divine tribunal. But the overpowering thought of Omnipotence is now tempered by the human sympathy of his companion, whose open hands, connecting the past with the present, seem almost to articulate, ‘ Alas, my brother ! ’ By this exquisite turn, we are next brought to John, the gentle almoner of the Church, who is dealing out their portions to the needy brethren. And here, as most remote from the judged Ananias, whose suffering seems not yet to have reached it, we find a spot of repose, — not to pass by, but to linger upon, till we feel its quiet influence diffusing itself over the whole mind ; nay, till, connecting it with the beloved Disciple, we find it leading us back through the exciting scene, modifying even our deepest emotions with a kindred tranquillity.

"This is Invention; we have not moved a step through the picture but at the will of the Artist. He invented the chain which we have followed, link by link, through every emotion, assimilating many into one; and this is the secret by which he prepared us, without exciting horror, to contemplate the struggle of mortal agony.

"This too is Art; and the highest art, when thus the awful power, without losing its character, is tempered, as it were, to our mysterious desires. In the work of Ostade, we see the same inventive power, no less effective, though acting through the medium of the humblest materials."

We add to these a magnificent passage on the Farnese Hercules, contrasted with the Apollo Belvedere, in illustration of his idea of Truth.

"Of the immutable nature of this peculiar Truth, we have a like instance in the Farnese Hercules; the work of the Grecian sculptor Glycon,—we had almost said his immortal offspring. Since the time of its birth, cities and empires, even whole nations, have disappeared, giving place to others, more or less barbarous or civilized; yet these are as nothing to the countless revolutions which have marked the interval in the manners, habits, and opinions of men. Is it reasonable, then, to suppose that any thing not immutable in its nature could possibly have withstood such continual fluctuation? But how have all these changes affected this *visible image of Truth*? In no wise; not a jot; and because what is *true* is independent of opinion; it is the same to us now as it was to the men of the dust of antiquity. The unlearned spectator of the present day may not, indeed, see in it the Demigod of Greece; but he can never mistake it for a mere exaggeration of the human form; though of mortal mould, he cannot doubt its possession of more than mortal powers; he feels its *essential life*, for he feels before it as in the stirring presence of a superior being.

"Perhaps the attempt to give form and substance to a pure Idea was never so perfectly accomplished as in this wonderful figure. Who has ever seen the ocean in repose, in its awful sleep, that smooths it like glass, yet cannot level its unfathomed swell? So seems to us the repose of this tremendous personification of strength: the laboring eye heaves on its slumbering sea of muscles, and trembles like a skiff as it passes over them; but the silent intimations of the spirit beneath at length become audible; the startled imagination hears it in its rage, sees it in motion, and sees its resistless might in the passive wrecks that follow the uproar. And this from a piece of marble, cold, immovable, life-

less ! Surely there is that in man, which the senses cannot reach, nor the plumb of the understanding sound.

“ Let us now turn to the Apollo called Belvedere. In this supernal being, the human form seems to have been assumed as if to make visible the harmonious confluence of the pure ideas of grace, fleetness, and majesty ; nor do we think it too fanciful to add celestial splendor ; for such, in effect, are the thoughts which crowd, or rather rush, into the mind on first beholding it. Who that saw it in what may be called the place of its glory, the Gallery of Napoleon, ever thought of it as a man, much less as a statue ; but did not feel rather as if the vision before him were of another world, — of one who had just lighted on the earth, and with a step so ethereal, that the next instant he would vault into the air ? If I may be permitted to recall the impression which it made on myself, I know not that I could better describe it than as a sudden intellectual flash, filling the whole mind with light — and light in motion. It seemed to the mind what the first sight of the sun is to the senses, as it emerges from the ocean ; when from a point of light the whole orb at once appears to bound from the waters, and to dart its rays, as by a visible explosion, through the profound of space. But, as the deified Sun, how completely is the conception verified in the thoughts that follow the effulgent original and its marble counterpart ! Perennial youth, perennial brightness, follow them both. Who can imagine the old age of the sun ? As soon may we think of an old Apollo. Now all this may be ascribed to the imagination of the beholder. Granted, — yet will it not thus be explained away. For that is the very faculty addressed by every work of Genius, — whose nature is *suggestive* ; and only when it excites to or awakens congenial thoughts and emotions, filling the imagination with corresponding images, does it attain its proper end. The false and the commonplace can never do this.

“ It were easy to multiply similar examples ; the bare mention of a single name in modern art might conjure up a host, — the name of Michael Angelo, the mighty sovereign of the Ideal, than whom no one ever trod so near, yet so securely, the dizzy brink of the Impossible.”

The next discourse is on the subject of Form, and upon this much disputed matter we think Mr. Allston has thrown a great deal of new light. He thus summarily and satisfactorily disposes of a very common theory, — that of an ideal or standard form.

“ Let us now endeavor to form some general notion of Man in his various aspects, as presented by the myriads which people the

earth. But whose imagination is equal to the task,—to the setting in array before it the countless multitudes, each individual in his proper form, his proper character? Were this possible, we should stand amazed at the interminable differences, the hideous variety; and that, too, no less in the moral, than in the physical; nay, so opposite and appalling in the former as hardly to be figured by a chain of animals, taking for the extremes the fierce and filthy hyena and the inoffensive lamb. This is man in the concrete,—to which, according to some, is to be applied the *abstract Ideal!*

“Now, let us attempt to conceive of a being that shall represent all the diversities of mind, affections, and dispositions, that fleck this heterogeneous mass of humanity, and then to conceive of a Form that shall be in such perfect affinity with it as to indicate them all. The bare statement of the proposition shows its absurdity. Yet this must be the office of a Standard Form; and this it must do, or it will be a falsehood. Nor should we find it easier with any given number, with twenty, fifty, nay, an hundred (so called) generic forms. We do not hesitate to affirm, that, were it possible, it would be quite as easy with one as with a thousand.”

The empirical rules are then examined, and the ground, or rather groundlessness, of most of them, is clearly set forth; but, in conclusion, they are admitted to be *expedient fictions*,—in other words, not absolute laws, but only such practical directions as may be set aside by the higher authority of the artist “in whose mind alone is the ultimate rule.”

The fourth and last discourse is on Composition, of which Mr. Allston lays down the following as the required characteristics.

“First, Unity of Purpose, as expressing the general sentiment or intention of the Artist. Secondly, Variety of Parts, as expressed in the diversity of shape, quantity, and line. Thirdly, Continuity, as expressed by the connection of parts with each other, and their relation to the whole. Fourthly, Harmony of Parts.”

The following brief sketches will exhibit the manner in which some of these characteristics are illustrated.

“In the wild and stormy scenes of *Salvator Rosa*, they break upon us as with the angular flash of lightning; the eye is dashed up one precipice only to be dashed down another; then, suddenly hurried to the sky, it shoots up, almost in a direct line, to some sharp-edged rock; whence pitched, as it were, into a sea of clouds,

bellying with circles, it partakes their motion, and seems to reel, to roll, and to plunge with them into the depths of air.

“ If we pass from Salvator to Claude, we shall find a system of lines totally different. Our first impression from Claude is that of perfect *unity*, and this we have even before we are conscious of a single image ; as if, circumscribing his scenes by a magic circle, he had imposed his own mood on all who entered it. The *spell* then opens ere it seems to have begun, acting upon us with a vague sense of limitless expanse, yet so continuous, so gentle, so imperceptible in its remotest gradations, as scarcely to be felt, till, combining with unity, we find the feeling embodied in the complete image of intellectual repose, — fulness and rest. The mind thus disposed, the charmed eye glides into the scene : a soft, undulating light leads it on, from bank to bank, from shrub to shrub ; now leaping and sparkling over pebbly brooks and sunny sands ; now fainter and fainter, dying away down shady slopes, then seemingly quenched in some secluded dell ; yet only for a moment, — for a dimmer ray again carries it onward, gently winding among the boles of trees and rambling vines, that, skirting the ascent, seem to hem in the twilight ; then emerging into day, it flashes in sheets over towers and towns, and woods and streams, when it finally dips into an ocean, so far off, so twin-like with the sky, that the doubtful horizon, unmarked by a line, leaves no point of rest : and now, as in a flickering arch, the fascinated eye seems to sail upward like a bird, wheeling its flight through a mottled labyrinth of clouds, on to the zenith ; whence, gently inflected by some shadowy mass, it slants again downward to a mass still deeper, and still to another, and another, until it falls into the darkness of some massive tree, — focused like midnight in the brightest noon : there stops the eye, instinctively closing, and giving place to the Soul, there to repose and to dream her dreams of romance and love.”

The following pithy paragraph is of universal application.

“ We might go on thus with every great name in Art. But these examples are enough to show how much even the most original minds, not only may, but *must*, owe to others ; for the social law of our nature applies no less to the intellect than to the affections. When applied to genius, it may be called the social inspiration, the simple statement of which seems to us of itself a solution of the oft-repeated question, ‘ Why is it that genius always appears in clusters ? ’ To Nature, indeed, we must all at last recur, as to the only true and permanent foundation of real excellence. But Nature is open to all men alike, in her beauty, her majesty, her grandeur, and her sublimity. Yet who will assert that all men see, or, if they see, are impressed by these her

attributes alike ? Nay, so great is the difference, that one might almost suppose them inhabitants of different worlds. Of Claude, for instance, it is hardly a metaphor to say that he lived in two worlds during his natural life ; for Claude the pastry-cook could never have seen the same world that was made visible to Claude the painter. It was human sympathy, acting through human works, that gave birth to his intellect at the age of forty. There is something, perhaps, ludicrous in the thought of an infant of forty. Yet the fact is a solemn one, that thousands die whose minds have never been born."

With these passages we must close our notice of these precious remains, — this golden legacy to the art and literature of our country. The book will sink deeply into the mind of the age, and its influence will slowly but surely extend itself through the whole domain of American culture. We rejoice to hear that the *Life and Correspondence of Mr. Allston*, — now, it is understood, in preparation by a distinguished relative and a kindred genius, — will soon be published. We can foresee, and we venture to predict for them, a welcome as cordial as the warmest friends of the subject and the editor can desire.

ART. VIII. — 1. *Papers and Correspondence relative to the Arctic Expedition under Sir John Franklin.* Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed March 5, 1850. Folio.

2. *The Franklin Expedition, or Considerations on Measures for the Discovery and Relief of our Absent Adventurers in the Arctic Regions.* With Maps. By the Rev. W. SCORESBY, D. D., Fellow of the Royal Societies of London and Edinburgh, Member of the Institute of France, &c. London. 1850.

JUST a year ago, an account was given in this journal of Sir John Franklin's disappearance, and the expeditions sent to his relief. The last have returned, Franklin has not. The want of success in these expeditions has aroused an enthusiastic interest in the fate of the lost navigator, both in England and in the United States, which is as characteristic of the present